

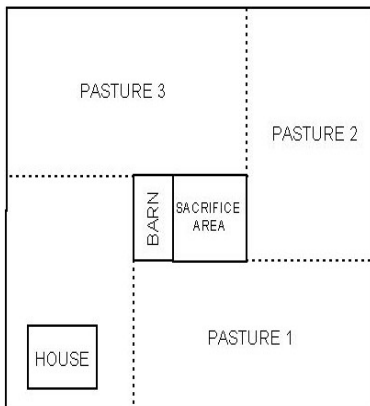


**Clallam Conservation
District**

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- **Separate large pastures into smaller paddocks using cross-fencing.**
- **Rotate livestock between the paddocks, allowing each to recover and grow after use.**
- **Confine animals in a sacrifice area when soils are too wet for use, or when the pasture is dormant or recovering.**
- **Obtain a soil test for your pasture to determine fertilizer requirements.**
- **Clip and drag your pastures on a regular basis to spread manure and promote even grass growth.**



Sample rotational grazing layout.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT

What is Pasture Management?

Pasture management incorporates several different management techniques that when applied together, promote excellent grass growth and healthy soils. By utilizing the management techniques below, you'll reduce your feed costs, protect natural resources and promote good livestock health.

Take Half, Leave Half Rule

The bottom 2-3 inches of grasses are where the sugars and proteins are stored that are needed for regrowth. A good rule of thumb to apply is the "Take Half, Leave Half" rule which allows plants to retain the important energy bank found in the lower part of the plant. For example, if the plant is eight inches tall, graze down to 3-4 inches, and then move the animals, allowing the pasture to rest and regrow. Overgrazing occurs when livestock are permitted to graze grass below the energy zone. Overgrazing can lead to bare spots, which in turn can allow for weed growth, soil erosion and polluted runoff into nearby streams and wetlands.

Rotational Grazing

In order to prevent overgrazing and to control livestock access to pastures, we recommend subdividing your pastures into smaller units through the use of cross-fencing. This will allow you to rotate livestock between the units once the minimum stubble height has been reached. If animals are allowed to graze at will, most will overgraze a pasture (especially horses which have evolved to continuously graze). Also, certain types of livestock prefer certain grass species and will often selectively overgraze these areas. It is important to closely monitor your pastures and remove the livestock once the minimum stubble height is reached.

Winter Confinement

Livestock should not be permitted on pastures when the grass is dormant (during the winter months) or when the soils are wet and not suitable for use. Allowing livestock to graze on wet soils will lead to soil compaction, rutting, and an overall reduction in pasture health. Soil that is compacted restricts root growth and prevents water from moving through the soil to roots. Livestock should be confined in a suitable paddock during the winter months and only permitted on the pastures when the soils can support their weight (they should not leave hoofprints). Please refer to the "Sacrifice Areas" worksheet for more information on developing a mud-free winter confinement area.

Mow & Drag

Mowing the pasture simply cuts all of the plants in a pasture to the same height. This prevents plants from becoming old and unpalatable, and also from dominating other species. Dragging a pasture breaks up clumps of manure and spreads it evenly around. Dragging a pasture can be accomplished by using several devices such as a piece of chain link fence or an old bed spring pulled behind a tractor or truck.

Reseeding and Pasture Establishment

If you are improving an old pasture, or developing a new pasture, obtaining a soil test will be useful in determining if your pH is out of balance or if your soil is deficient of nutrients. When selecting grass species for seeding, be sure to research each of the species' requirements (such as fertility, soil moisture requirements, and hardiness). Contact the Conservation District for more help when selecting grass species or if you have any questions about pasture management in general.